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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 008791

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [KISL](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [ASEC](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: INDIANS WORRY LASHKAR TERRORISTS ARE THRIVING IN  
PAKISTANI KASHMIR

REF: A. NEW DELHI 8751

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 8715

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Apprehension is mounting in India about Pakistan-based terrorist groups' exploitation of relief efforts to enhance their capabilities, recruitment, and operations against India. Indians are also noticing with alarm that terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jammāt-ul-Dawwa (JuD) are taking credit for relief materials distributed by the USG and other donors; one Kashmiri separatist told us he personally saw the LeT hoarding and distributing American relief, metaphorically wrapped in the Jihadists' unyielding ideology. The loss of government schools on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control (LoC) also provokes Indians to worry that terrorists are expanding recruitment into Madrassas. As reftels report, the spike in terrorism against India is sparking worry here that the quake did not, in fact, wipe out these groups. Rather, it may have strengthened the terrorists and weakened Indian defensive perimeters. Proof of this, say the Indians, is that police have seized 1600 kilos of explosives since the quake, while only 140 kilos had been intercepted in the nine previous months. Meanwhile, Kashmiris are themselves sick of the violence. The Kashmir-based Hizb-ul-Mujahiddin condemned the car bombing that killed four on October 16. The Hurriyat called November 17 for an end to bloodshed, and a leading hardliner defected from hardline India-hater SAS Geelani. One Kashmiri Muslim who lost a relative in an October 16 blast was quoted in a newspaper as saying, "This is evil; God will punish them." In Indian Kashmir, at least, Jihadists have lost the war for the hearts and minds of Kashmiris. END SUMMARY.

HIJACKING USG RELIEF, SPREADING HATE  
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[1](#)2. (C) Poloff spoke November 10 to Yasin Malik, a noted Kashmiri separatist who traveled to Pakistan shortly after the October 8 quake to show solidarity. Malik said he had met with President Musharraf and PM Shaukat Aziz, and, at their urging, had met Pakistani political parties including the MQM and PPP, and also had seen extremists such as Syed Salahuddin (Muhammad Yusuf Shah) of the United Jihad Council in Muzaffarabad and Hafiz Mohamed Saeed of Markaz-ul-Dawwa in Lahore. His message to the "militants," said Malik, was simple: Kashmiris were sick of violence and wanted terrorists to surrender their weapons and participate in political dialogue. Kashmir would find peace only through dialogue, insisted Malik, and, in his view, even the extremists needed to be brought on board if violence was to stop for good. Quoting the last hadith of the Prophet, an exhortation that peace-makers will attain paradise, Malik says he tried his best to convince a crowd of 700 rigid, unyielding extremists in Lahore of the value of contributing to the political compromises taking place between India and Pakistan and between Kashmiris and Delhi.

[1](#)3. (C) Malik concluded his readout with some disturbing "ground truth" for our consumption. He said he had personally seen USG relief aid in what he thought were LeT camps in Pakistani Kashmir, and had seen LeT operatives openly distributing foreign relief even as they spread their message of uncompromising poison and religious hatred. The LeT commanders, claimed Malik, boast that the foreign aid has actually strengthened their capabilities, organization, recruiting, and effectiveness. More worrying for Indians over the long-term is the quake's impact on education. Former US Institute for Peace fellow Praveen Swami, writing in the "Hindu" on November 17, said Pakistani newspapers are reporting that Lashkar is using its relief operations to recruit growing numbers of young people, for whom tales of fedayeen (suicide) exploits are seductive.

AND KILLING INDIANS  
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[1](#)4. (C) Reftels cite the litany of almost-daily terrorist incidents in India since the quake. Delhi-based analysts, who initially chortled that the quake had destroyed terrorist camps, are now worried that the quake actually strengthened them. The "Asian Age" reported November 18 that security forces have recovered a staggering 1600 kilos of explosives since October 8, compared to only 140 kilos recovered during

the entire first nine months of 2005. The newspaper cited a Home Ministry source as saying 50-60 LeT operatives have managed to enter Jammu and Kashmir following the quake, taking advantage of the Army's shift from LoC patrolling to humanitarian relief. Security forces claim also to have arrested 58 terrorists since October 14.

KASHMIRIS ENTIRELY FED UP

15. (C) The net effect of all this killing is a sense among Kashmiris that the Jihadis are a scourge. On November 18 the moderate Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat separatist group issued a clear statement calling for an end to violence, saying, "Kashmir has soaked a lot of blood and time has come to put an end to the violence, in whatever form or level, so that there would be no hurdles in the way of a peaceful resolution..." In another development, notorious India hater and hardliner SAS Geelani suffered yet another defection as Masarat Alam left his group and condemned the Geelani Hurriyat's rigidity. This marks the fourth defection from Geelani in two months, showing how far his stock has fallen among Kashmiris. Geelani remains resolutely opposed to dialogue with India. An Indian Express article following the J&K bank car bombing quoted Kashmiri Muslims as saying, "This is evil; what do they want to accomplish with these bombs? God will punish them." Another quote: "This has to stop. (They) cannot get away with such senseless mayhem."

IT'S NO WONDER THE INDIANS ARE WARY

16. (C) COMMENT: As a result of the rising tide of violence, it comes as no surprise that the GOI is moving with extreme caution on opening the LoC to people who wish to visit family on the other side. Indian officials tell us they would genuinely like free trade and movement of peoples, but the certainty that terrorists from Pakistan will mix themselves among the LoC crossers is too high for them to ignore. The GOI is watching what is happening in Pakistani Kashmir with increasing alarm, even as ordinary Kashmiris mourn their dead, senselessly killed by fellow Muslims. For the GOI, at least, the silver lining in the whole affair is that Indian Kashmiris are more and more repulsed by Jehadi rhetoric and tactics. END COMMENT.  
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